



Family Self-Sufficiency News

Fall 2010

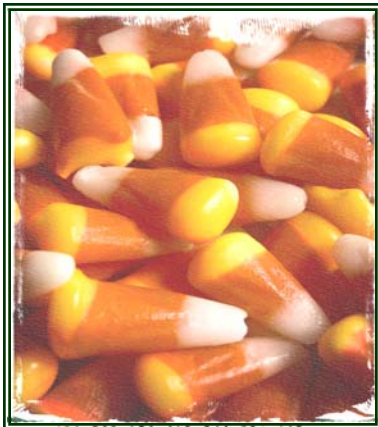
Volume 5, Issue 3

Holiday Fun: Tips for a Safe "Trick or Treat"

The spookiest night of the year is around the corner. Kids everywhere are choosing their favorite costume and looking forward to treats. As parents and caregivers prepare for this celebration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reminds us all to keep safety in mind. Halloween-related injuries can be easily prevented. The following tips can help you to ensure that this year's holiday is a safe one:

Costumes:

1. When purchasing costumes, look for flame-resistant fabrics, such as nylon, polyester, or the label "Flame Resistant." Avoid costumes made with flimsy materials, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts.
2. Trim costumes and decorate bags and backpacks with reflective tape that glows in the beam of a car's headlights (available in hardware, bicycle and sporting goods stores).
3. Carry flashlights to see and be seen.
4. Purchase or make bright costumes that are easily visible at night. This will improve your visibility to motorists.



Treats:

1. Warn children not to eat any treats until an adult has examined them carefully for evidence of tampering.
2. Do not allow young children to have any items that are small or have pieces that present a choking hazard.
3. Avoid baked goods or items that have been rewrapped or repackaged.



Decorations:

1. Keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from areas where costumes could brush against the flame.
2. Keep candles and Jack O' Lanterns away from curtains, decorations and other combustibles. Do not leave burning candles unattended.
3. Remove obstacles from lawns, steps and porches when expecting trick-or-treaters.
4. Supervise pumpkin carving to avoid lacerations.

We hope you have a safe and happy holiday. If you have any safety tips that you would like to share, we would love to hear from you! Contact our office at (858) 694-8709 or email your ideas to:

Michelle.Richardson@sdcounty.ca.gov

Abridged article courtesy of www.cpsc.gov



Quick Announcements

Annual Participant Updates:

Last Chance!

If you have not yet turned in your FSS Annual Update, please contact either Michelle Richardson at (858) 694-8709 or Julia Hylton at (858) 694-4823 and complete yours today!

FSS Fall 2010

Scholarship Winners!

The Family Self-Sufficiency program is proud to announce that seven scholarships will be awarded for Fall 2010. Congratulations to: Jazmene, Danielle, Shantell, Silvia, Delexstine, James and Sharon! We would like to thank everyone who submitted an essay and we encourage all participants enrolling for the next semester to apply for our Spring 2011 scholarship program. A notice will be sent out to participants when scholarship applications become available this winter. If you have any questions, please call (858) 694-4823.



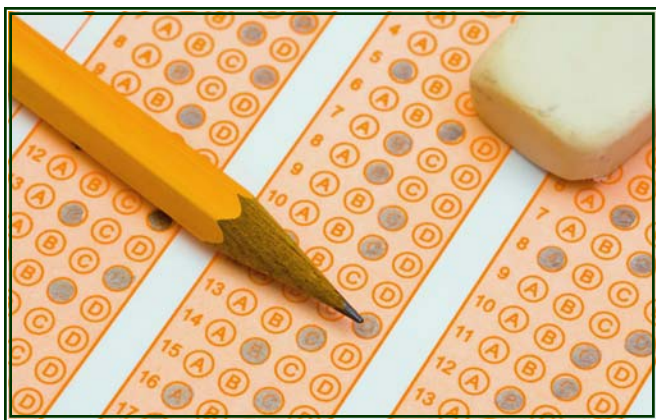
The Family Self Sufficiency staff wishes everyone a happy and safe upcoming holiday season. We encourage you to use this time to celebrate your past achievements, and to prepare new goals for the upcoming year. If your goals have changed, please contact an FSS team member at (858) 694-8709 to update your contract.



Back to School: Managing Test Anxiety

According to the University of Texas at Dallas, test anxiety is, “the emotional reactions that some students have to exams.” These emotions can manifest themselves in several different ways: upset stomach, sweaty hands, and panic, to name a few. Such symptoms can create a distraction; making concentrating on the exam difficult.

If you frequently experience these feelings during exams, do not be discouraged. It is very common for students to experience some level of anxiety in testing situations. Thankfully, the Institute of HeartMath has compiled a few tools to help you relax and stay focused. Practice these tools before and during a test to help limit test anxiety and perform better.



Practice the neutral tool: When you have uncomfortable feelings about whether you will do well on the test, practice the neutral tool. It's important to catch negative mind loops that reinforce self-doubt or uncomfortable feelings. Every time you catch a negative thought repeating itself, stop the loop and practice going to neutral. Start by focusing on the area around your heart. This helps to take the focus off the mind loop. Then breathe deeply. Breathe as if your breath is flowing in and out through the center of your chest. Breathe quietly and naturally, four-five seconds on the in-breath, and four-five seconds on the out-breath. While you're breathing, try and find an attitude of calmness about the situation. Do this in the days leading up to the test, right before and during the test.

Get enough sleep: Big tests require a lot of energy

and stamina to be able to focus for several hours. Make sure you get at least 8-10 hours of sleep the night before the test.

Eat a hearty breakfast: Eat a hearty and healthy breakfast to make your energy last as long as possible. Foods such as eggs, cereal and whole-wheat toast help energize your brain to think more clearly and much longer compared to drinking a soda pop or eating a cookie. For snacks, simple foods such as cheese and crackers will sustain energy until lunch.

Strategize! Make a plan to thoroughly prepare yourself emotionally and academically before you take the exam:

Before the Test

1. Spread review of class material over several days rather than cramming. Intensive review should be done a few days before test.
2. Review everything: text, notes, and homework problems. When in doubt, talk to your teacher.
3. Use 3x5 cards for learning specific concepts or formulas.
4. Take a practice test under exam-like conditions. Ask your teacher how much time you should budget for each question, and then practice pacing yourself with a stopwatch.
5. Continue with your regular exercise program. If none exists, consider taking a daily walk to help relieve stress.

During the Test

1. Read the directions carefully.
2. Budget your test taking time.
3. Change positions to help you relax.
4. If you go blank, skip the question and go on.
5. Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward for being the first done.

**This article was written with information from the University of Texas at Dallas, www.schoolcounselor.org and the Institute of HeartMath. For more tools and tips on how to reduce stress, visit: <http://www.mindtools.com/stress/>*



Tips for Making Food Affordable

For most families, food is a large part of the holiday celebration; however, the expense can take its toll on one's budget. A little planning can help families prepare healthy meals at affordable prices. The following are some tips to help you make the most of your holiday food funds.

Make a meal plan: Taking the time to map out meals ahead of time can reduce unnecessary spending in the grocery store, and save on gas to and from the supermarket. Buy in bulk, pick a day to prepare the next week's meals and freeze. This type of planning can help cut down on time spent in the kitchen and eating out.

Scan ads for prices and coupons: Be cautious, though. Some coupon items at large supermarkets may

actually cost more than at smaller, family owned or specialty stores. When in doubt, use a calculator and call ahead.

Plan your trip: using computer programs, like the *Mapquest Route Planner*, can help cut down on gas and time going from one store to the next.

Buy uncooked, bulk food items: The extra prep time can be worth the effort. Not only are most bulk, dry food items less expensive than pre-cooked, but you control what is in the food.

Using these tips can really cut down on the cost of food! If you have any tips to share, please contact the office at (858) 694-8709.

Fall Food: Light Stove-Top Cheddar Macaroni and Cheese

Ask any group of Americans what their 10 favorite comfort foods are, and, most likely, Mac 'n' Cheese will make the list. Though a tasty and quick meal, macaroni and cheese is high in saturated fats and carbohydrates. Nutritionally, there are three ways to improve on homemade macaroni and cheese:

Make a low fat and low saturated fat cheese sauce: reduce or eliminate the butter and use low-fat milk instead of whole milk or cream.

Use a higher-fiber noodles: Most taste great, boost the nutrients and fiber in the dish and are widely available in supermarkets.

Add some veggies. Stir in the lightly cooked veggies right before serving or serve them on the side.

This recipe combines the above tips and cooks up in roughly the same time as most major boxed brands! You can enjoy a healthier favorite on the go or freeze for later.

Ingredients:

3 cups dry whole-grain or whole-grain blend elbow macaroni

1 tablespoon butter (reduced from 1/4 cup)

5 tablespoons quick-mixing flour

3 cups low-fat or non-fat milk

Salt and pepper to taste

3 cups shredded reduced-fat sharp or medium cheddar cheese

Optional 1 1/2 cups frozen peas and carrots

Preparation:

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add the macaroni, cook for 10 minutes, then drain.
2. While noodles are cooking, melt the butter in a medium saucepan, then remove it from the heat. Stir in the flour to make a paste.
3. Whisk in the milk, and bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat to simmer, stir in salt, black pepper, and stir frequently until the sauce thickens (about 5 minutes). Whisk in an additional tablespoon of flour, if needed for desired thickness.
4. Remove from heat, add cheese, and stir well (the cheeses will melt almost immediately). Pour the cheese sauce into the large saucepan with macaroni and optional vegetables. Stir to combine.

Makes 6-8 servings.

Full article by Elaine Magee, MPH, RD available at www.webmd.com/food-recipes

Assistant Director
Todd Henderson
Director
David Estrella,
Community Development
Department of Housing and
Chief Administrative Officer
Walter F. Ekard

Bill Horn, District 5
Ron Roberts, District 4
Pam Slater-Price, District 3
Dianne Jacob, District 2
Greg Cox, District 1
Board of Supervisors



Coordinator's Corner: Porting your FSS Participation



According to the United States Census Bureau, the “average American” will move about 12 times in their life. If you are planning on moving in the near future, you are not alone! In fact, millions of Americans are projected to make a move within the next year. As you begin to plan, some things should be kept in mind regarding FSS:

Does my current Housing Specialist know that I am moving? It is vital that your Housing Specialist knows if you are in the process of a move. Be sure to check in with them regularly.

Will the FSS program, of the area I am going to, be able to bring me on as a participant? There is a possibility that some FSS programs in other areas are full, and will not be able to bring on

new participants. It is good to know this before your move so that you can inform your current Housing Specialist and FSS program office to work out a solution.

When you reach your destination, be sure to keep in contact with both the receiving FSS program and old FSS program offices to ensure the transfer of your FSS participation is going smoothly.

Taking the time to collect all the information and get organized can greatly reduce stress when the big day comes. For more information or to notify the program of move, first contact your Housing Specialist, then call the FSS office at (858) 694-8709.



Building Better Neighborhoods

County of San Diego
Housing & Community Development
Family Self-Sufficiency Program
3989 Ruffin Road
San Diego CA 92123

Phone: 858-694-8709
Fax: 858-514-6524
E-mail:

Dolores.Diaz@sdcounty.ca.gov
www.sdhcd.org